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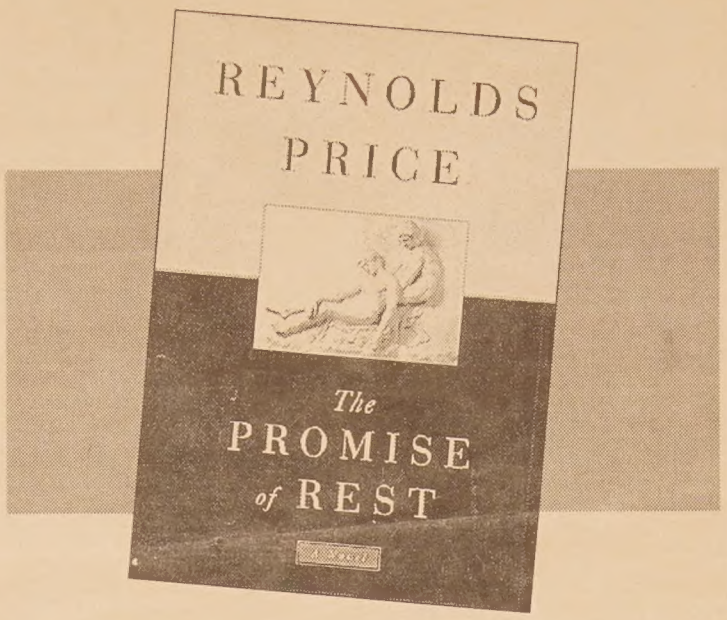
Southern Saga

The Promise of Rest
by Reynolds Price;
Scribner, $24

by Chris Hewitt



Reynolds Price's novel *The Promise of Rest* deals with the effects of AIDS on a Southern white patrician family. Wade Mayfield, a young New York architect, is brought home to die by his father, Hutchins Mayfield, a writer-in-residence at Duke University (like the author himself). Wade's presence among his estranged family unlocks their guilt and remorse, and forces them to deal with their racial prejudices (Wade's now-dead lover was black, and Ivory, the lover's "light-skinned" sister, comes along to take care of Wade), fear of the disease and homophobia. Sounds like a great setup for a novel – and so it is.

However, Price, whose past work is powerful and packed with flinty Southern "characters" and "local color," fails to engage the reader in this latest effort, the concluding volume in his *A Great Circle* trilogy. The author chooses Hutchins, not Wade, as the central character here, but unfortunately fails to make him likable or even believable. Hutch comes across as narcissistic and arrogant when we see him in action in the classroom at the beginning of the book. He speaks pretentiously and as anachronistically as a character from Henry James. When a graduate student comes to ask advice about a failing marriage and tells Hutch that sex has never been a problem with his (the student's) wife, Hutch exclaims, "Oh bountifully lucky pair!" Do Southerners, even professors at Duke, speak like this?

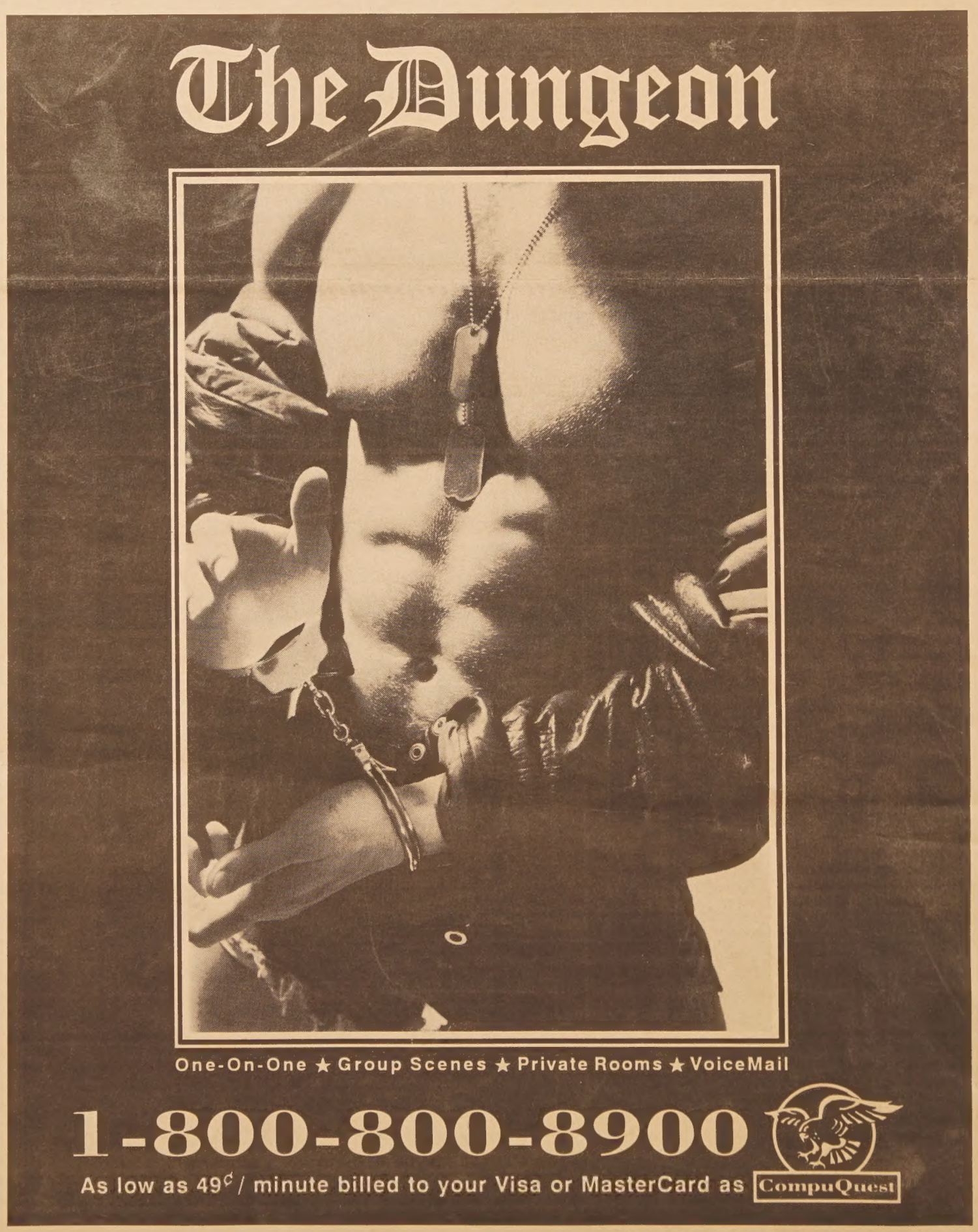
Crusty centenarian

However much Price describes Hutchins' anguish, we don't feel it. The only character who is believable and fully realized in the book is Hutchins' 101-year-old curmudgeonly cousin Grainger, who, in a crusty way, is quite witty.

This book is almost entirely devoid of humor and human warmth. Of course the situation is grim, but real people can and do still find things to laugh at, even in life-and-death situations – and I don't just mean "bedpan" humor.

What's lacking, too, in this book is the passion and intensity of a writer who has experienced the plague first or even secondhand, the passion and intensity of, say, the late and much-lamented novelist and poet Paul Monette. This is strange because Price has himself experienced life-threatening illness for a number of years – spinal cancer – so one would have thought he could have identified more strongly with Wade's suffering and described it more movingly. As written, however, Wade comes across as little more than a cipher, a bundle of symptoms.

Price's big mistake was, I think, in focusing on Hutchins, a character perhaps too much like himself in background and experience. Perhaps in an attempt to distance himself from his alter ego, Price has distanced us, the readers, from him, also. Wade's mother Ann comes across as a hard-assed yuppie. Because we are not made to care about the family members, their coming together and "letting bygones be bygones" doesn't have much impact on us . If Price had written the novel in the first person, from Hutchins' point of view, we might have had more empathy for his character and for the family in general. ▼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Parting Glances

Rick @ N'Touch 4/21
Can't stop thinking about you. Please call. I'd like to see you again. ✆ **3002**.

SF Film Festival, Castro Theater, 5/24
You: dark hair and beard. I was in long line near Pasqua. You walked by. We exchanged surprised smiles. You kept walking. My eyes and heart followed, but not my shy feet. ✆ **3003**.

You're Late!
Sunday 4/30 9:45. You: running for J Church at Clipper (Embarcadero), 6'4"-ish? Me: GAM on Sunday run. Interested in meeting you. Please call. ✆ **3039**.

Pendulum Sun 4/30 10-11pm
You: BM wearing glasses and light blue shirt talking w/ WM by pool table. Me: 6'2" WM wearing green henley, talking w/ friends. We smiled, would like to meet you! Please call! ✆ **3101**.

J Church, Sat., Morning, 4/29
You: cute man of color, torn jeans, drinking coffee, back pack. Me: white, seated at other end of train staring at you, I got off at Civic Center. You waved at me. I want to say hello to you and see you smile. Please call! ✆ **3102**.

Nidal
Have not talked in 2 years; please call Jim. Want to make sure that you are ok. Call!! ✆ **3103**.

Midnight Sun
We met in Midnight Sun on Tuesday afternoon 5/2. We went to Circuit City and then you gave me a ride home. Just want to know how you're doing please call. ✆ **3104**.

Italian In The Park
Michael-You were riding your bike in Golden Gate Park on your day off. I was the tall blonde in a truck. Would like to talk again. ✆ **4001**.

No. 6 on Market Street
On 5/9, 3:15. We both cruised each other. You were carrying a case, filled w/ a plastic files. You got off near Radio Shack Store. Me: 40, blk hr, goatee, brown jacket. Call me. ✆ **4002**.

Richard, San Leandro
We met at N'Touch months ago. You called to tell me you had moved, but forgot to get your new phone number. Miss you. ✆ **4003**.

5/11/95 Rumors Hayward
You: Sitting between two friends near door at 6:45pm. I came in and sat half way down the bar and had a beer, we exchanged glances when I walked behind you to grab a B.A.R. on leaving. Call and leave phone #. ✆ **4004**.

Great Butt.
Wayne met you at the Rawhide 5/5. Enjoyed the talk & the view. Love to get that butt on the dance floor. Want to brush up? Joe - call me. ✆ **4005**.

14th/Landers Friday Evening. 5/12
Both with friends, You: blue stocking cap, Levi Jacket. Me: leather jacket, Brooklyn baseball cap. We both turned around and looked. Now, we should at least talk. ✆ **4033**.

Seeking Relationship M-M

Asian Lover Wanted
Handsome, WM, 51, (looks 30's), 5'11", clean shaven. Not a sugar daddy, HIV-, w/ a genuine and exclusive attraction to younger Asians. Seeks 25-30, under 5'6", slim, no face hair for long term relationship, sincere, monogamous. ✆ **3004**.

In Search of GLM
GWM, 39, 6', 210#, bl/bl, hairy seeks oral GLM who loves to kiss, cuddle and into fantasies. Not looking for a gym clone. Be under 45, N/D, HIV-. I'm waiting to make your fantasy come true. ✆ **3005**.

HIV+, 150#, 5'7", GBM Seeks
Asian or white bottom, age really does not matter if you have a youthful body and are thin to med build. I am attracted to guys who are naturally feminine. Me: straight appearing appearing, average looks thin build, a strong lover, personally low key, aggressive, can be a little overpowering, not into gay scene. ✆ **3006**.

New to SF
Tall goodlooking masculine & very well-built male seeks same. I'm 42, 6'1", 195# (HIV-) into bodybuilding, motorcycle & jeep trips, and macho lovin' w/ one intelligent together guy! ✆ **3007**.

Leather Top or Bottom
African American male wants to experience the leather trip again this time seeking a experience leather man or couple into videos toys, FF etc please be for real. ✆ **3008**.

Let's Explore Life Together
If you want to meet an honest, open, spiritual, intelligent, passionate, GWM, 32yo, 135#, and you are the same (race not important) and you are into exercise of the mind & body, then we could be for each other. ✆ **3009**.

Orlando Tights
GWM professional in Florida has sensual fetish for the feel/look of nylon/lycra. Not into drag. Loves the Bay Area & seeks friends, bicycling, ballet & kitties. ✆ **3010**.

Butch GWM
6'1", 205#, 35, br/bl, gym toned, healthy seeks rock solid, hard muscled Latino/Mexican or Asian for fun times and possible relationship. ✆ **3011**.

Significant Other
I'm a very attractive GWM, HIV+. Love comedy, arts, entertainment and people. Seeking similar top man over 6 feet tall. North Bay resident. ✆ **3016**.

More Than Sex
Goodlooking top, 44yo, looking for a submissive bottom into bondage and S&M, hairy a plus, also into movies and having fun. New to the city. HIV+. ✆ **3012**.

Lover At Park Merced
Black male educator 33, 5'0", 190#, romantic, passionate, honest seeks friend, lover, championship 18-45. If interested call. ✆ **3018**.

Sensual Snuggle and J/O Sessions
Like videos? Like snuggling? Like J/O? Me too! Appearance, age race not important, N/D, No Drink, smoke ok. AM's or PM's, My place or yours. ✆ **3013**.

Soul Mate Needed
Attractive, GWM, 29, locked up for non violent offense, 6 months to go at 850 Bryant. I need some one to help straighten out my life and spend it with. Would lake attractive 23-30 GWM. ✆ **3014**.

Truth, Justice & The Gay American Way
GWM, 34, 6', 185#, handsome, Italian descent, top to versatile. Serious about meeting a super man. You are GWM 30-45, wgt. in proportion to hgt., attractive, dark Irish A+. No addictions, no pretense, soulful, ethical, truthful, relationship ready/talk of relentless hard on later. ✆ **3015**.

Gentleman Seeks Asian Top Youth
23-37 educated, likes weekend dating, drinking, romance in SF only. We: healthy, humorous, sexy. Me: gentle southern bottom inclined to LTR. GWM, early 50's, 5'11", 224#. ✆ **3017**.

I Have A Bear Magazine Look
GWM, 40, hairy, husky, balding, with a western moustache. I'm 5'9", 195#, dark brn hair. I'm looking for guy 20-30 w/ attractive boyish looks for a possible relationship. I enjoy bicycling walks, film, safe versatile sex & cuddling. ✆ **3041**.

Looking Sexy In Leather and Boots
Handsome, bl/bl, gym toned, 33yo, HIV-, ISO a lean under 35, relationship oriented GWM. Affectionate, politically aware and health conscious A+. If you're looking for a good guy who you'll want to spend time with, then give me a call! ✆ **3046**.

Vallejo GWM Seeks
GM, HIV-, petite body, No drinking /drugs/smoke, 30-40ish, a lone, not lonely seeking friendship w/ a honest "Don't Go To Bar Professional." Me: 5'8". Love to laugh and enjoy outdoors. Lets exchange calls and get together, you will be pleased. ✆ **3105**.

Goodlooking
Wants BM, 18-45yo. I can take 10' of manhood. No gag. I guarantee you'll be amazed. Deep throat. ✆ **3106**.

Russian River Hideaway
Mature English bachelor needs masculine married type for sexual action in Healdsburg. Also outdoor nakedness, boating, S/M, etc. ✆ **3111**.

Young Cute Buns Seeks Older Top
I'm 25, 6'1", 159# and of slim athletic (track & field) built w/ super cute buns and satin smooth skin. I'm exclusively attracted to very masculine men 52-69 seeking excellence in and out of bed. ✆ **3108**.

Available
33, 6'2", 175# very attractive top seeks sexual adventure and daring with a romantic, passionate man UB. around my age, trim and affectionate. ✆ **3109**.

Horny GBM Seeks GWM
I very attrc handsome muscular GBM. Strong, stern, silent, yet erotic & adventurous. Facial hair a must. You attrc & strong sexual drive. I'm vers. for the right man other wise I'm usually top. ✆ **3110**.

Muscular Hot GWM 37
Looking for a smooth hairless Asian to date & poss LTR. Please be honest, in shape and dependable. ✆ **3112**.

Marin Top
Clean cut, GWM, 43, 5'10", 185#, HIV+, healthy and happy, seeks a mature relationship with another man who enjoys being outdoors & who is into country living. Looking for someone HIV+, healthy, 35-45, of decent shape, mind & body w/ honorable intentions, to have my way with. ✆ **3113**.

Italian Romantic
Seeks GAM/GWM/GHM for companionship, romantic liaisons, and just good mutual fun. Live a little and enjoy what life has to give. Be sincere. San Jose/San Francisco willing to love and be loved. Be a real down-to-earth person. ✆ **3114**.

Let's Share A Life
GHM, 34, romantic, HIV-, NS, masculine, professional, humorous, adventures. Seeks GWM, 25-40, NS, HIV- for monogamous long term relationship. ✆ **3115**.

Tenderloin Type Wanted
Your scruffy GWM, 5'9" or less, under 45, ND, employed, HIV-, laidback and like big guys. Me: GWM 6', 240#, a top, and employed. Looking for good times and possible relationship. Many interests. ✆ **3116**.

BM, 38, 6'1", Attractive GWM
38, 6', 180#, HIV+, with short brown hair, and mustache, blue eyes, smooth body, seeks goodlooking, (be honest), men between 28-40. Only Latin, black, and Asian need apply. Lets be friends, then well see what happens. ✆ **3107**.

Masculine Tall GWM
Handsome, 43yo, 6'3", 175#, salt & pepper hair, HIV-, seeks steamy, monogamous relationship. You: WM, 30-45, HIV-, tall, financially secure, great sense of humor. Romantic & affectionate only need apply. ✆ **3117**.

They Say I'm Beautiful
But I've had no luck so far with relationships. I'm tall, dark, slim w/ nice smile. If you're WM 28-40 who's masculine and lonely then let's meet. Please be clean and safe. ✆ **3118**.

Looking For Latino/Mexican Guy
You: Cute, goodlooking 24-30yo who is fun, good style (clothes & home) good energy, tone body, smooth and nice smile. Me: 30yo white/Italian, dark hair/big brown eyes, 6'0", goodlooking, handsome, good style & smile. ✆ **3119**.

Positive Attraction
Are you HIV+, and tired of not dating? Read on! 35yo bl/bl, 6'3", 200#, HIV+ & healthy very handsome muscular romantic seeks playful dates to serious relationship w/ younger masculine muscular HIV+ romantics. ✆ **3120**.

Sexy SF GWM/GAM Top Sought
By generous, affectionate bottoms. Be younger than me, healthy, into raw sex. HIV+ (healthy ok, absolutely). We: humorous, like weekend dining/drinking. Me: GWM, early 50's, 220#. ✆ **3121**.

Looking for Younger GM
Looking for friendship/companion, over time possibly more. Me: 45, 5'9", 160#, attractive, professional, reliable, romantic. You: 20's-30's, 5'9" or less, nice looking, affectionate, honest sweet, maybe a bit on the quiet side, HIV-. ✆ **3122**.

Mature Rugged Body Builder
48yo, GWM, 5'11", 185#, br/br drug free, HIV-, clean shaven, non smoker into gyms, cars, motorcycles, travel. Not into bars. Seeks younger GWM for fun companionship and long sex sessions. ✆ **3123**.

Hot In-Shape GWM
32, Swimmer's build, 5'9", 140#, brn/grn educated professional seeks hot muscular man, any race. I'm fun, safe, HIV-, you too, please. ✆ **3150**.

Romantic Latins Please Apply
GWM, 39, 150#, 5'8", average build, hairy, bearded, bl/bl looking for a romantic Latin w/ moustache and masculine attitude. NS/ND (light drinker only). Well endowed and uncut a major plus!! ✆ **4008**.

Oral Expert Seeks Same
For LTR. I'm a 46yo, Cancer, 6', 175#, br/br, hairy, clean-cut, professional. Any age/race ok. NS, no pets. Uncut, hairy legs, videos, Vacu-Tech a +. ✆ **4008**.

GWM Bottom Seeks Top In San Francisco
You: younger than I, GWM or GAM, healthy, HIV+, ok. Like weekend romance, sex, dining and drinking. We: Fun, attitude free. LTR possible. Me: GWM, early 50's, 5'11", 220#. ✆ **4009**.

Big Headed Cock Thick 6 1/2
Beautiful, sexy, honest, sweet, Asian, 25, 4'8", 110#, HIV- seeks HIV-, GWM, 18-35, top/bottom. ✆ **4011**.

Buffed GBM Quality GWM
Masculine, muscled, intelligent, spirited, African-American, exec seeks versatile, mature, confident, witty, good looking, gym-toned, Euro-American hunk for sex, laughs, friendship... maybe more!! ✆ **4012**.

Mature, Sexy Man Needs a Love Life
60ish, neg., WASP, 5'10", 175#, smooth body, white hair, oral and JO needs a lover who is also mature to help me get a full erection. ✆ **4013**.

Dick Meister
36-50 w/ average cut tool, stable, professional, wanted by GWM, 40's cocksucker, HIV-, smoker, professional for oral devotion in hopes for LTR. ✆ **4014**.

Tall British Gentleman
Seeks Asian or Latin under 35. I'm new to area, HIV-, well built, young looking 50, fit, versatile, varied interests, NS, ND but not stuffy. ✆ **4015**.

Lover Sought
Attr. GWM, 71, 5'8", 160# seeks meaningful friendship & poss LTR w/ serious GDLKG, under 40 man seeking same w/ more mature, loving, caring, romantic man ✆ **4016**.

Attractive Latino Butch 24
5'7", 175#, HIV+, healthy, college student would like to meet Latins or whites for friendship perhaps more. You: 24-37, sincere, honest, outgoing, and someone who likes to take the initiative in life. ✆ **4017**.

Can't Wait Till Summer!
GWM, 31, masculine, muscular, looking for attractive man to enjoy the outdoors with. Love beaches, hiking, biking, 5'7", 170#. ✆ **4018**.

Attractive Music Lover
Me: GWM, blk/brn, 5'8", 145#, goatee, cultured, 26yo, diverse interest. You: white, creative, able to enjoy different social scenes, relationship material not casual sex, domesticated yet very social. Vices ok. 21-30. ✆ **4018**.

Seeking Generous Dad
Very attractive GAM, 140#, 5'9", is looking for dad to help me through college. I'm intelligent, funny, and sexually adventurous. ✆ **4034**.

Spontaneous Fun Together
37, 6', 150#, br/br, clean-cut, buffed, GWM. I enjoy movies & country weekends. We are both affectionate guys, midwest nice, who like to interlace nice bodies. You are beyond attitude. ✆ **4035**.

Seeking Adventure M-M

Big Beautiful Black Bully(25-38) Wanted
(4sex/poss LTR) by submissive, tall, cute GWM 33. UB tall, hot, hung, masculine, aggressive, muscular & always horny! I'm 6'3", Danish, sweet, masculine, always hungry. I swallow what you give me & do what you tell me to. Afterward we cuddle. Romance not excluded. ✆ **4007**.

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